

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE STATES AND TERRITORIES.

[The New National Era does not hold itself responsible for views expressed by correspondents. Well-written and interesting communications will be gladly received.]

From Missouri.

JEFFERSON CITY, Feb. 16, 1874.

To the Editor of the New National Era and Citizen:

The principal objection to the civil rights bill, is the objection made to the provision respecting public schools. It is said that it will destroy the public schools. This will not be the result; but on the other hand, it will create public schools. Public schools are schools open to the public; open to all children which may want to attend them. Schools which exclude any class of children are not public schools; they are select schools. Nearly all the schools in the recent slaveholding States are not public schools, but select schools; and the civil rights bill makes provision to change them from select schools to schools that are truly and really public schools. It is claimed that the great majority of white people would not send their children to schools which should admit colored children. If this should be the result, it would be a far less evil than the evil existing under the present state of things. There are many thousands of school districts in which there are only a few colored children—five, ten, or fifteen—not enough for a school. Hence there must be hundreds of thousands of colored children who are not provided with schools. There are also thousands of districts in which there is about an equal number of white and colored children, enough for one large school; but not enough for two. In such cases there is usually no school; consequently but a small part of the colored children, under the existing system of schools, have the means of getting an education. Statistics show that one-fourth of the colored children are attending school. This certainly is an evil of vast magnitude, and far greater than any evil that could result from the establishment of public schools on a true and righteous foundation. The cry raised against the civil rights bill is the same cry which has been raised whenever it has been proposed to secure to the colored people their just rights. When the proposition was made to admit negroes into the Union army many were shocked at the idea, and the cry rung throughout the land, "It will break up the Union and ruin the country." We hear the same cry now; but it is to be hoped that these men who have in the past defended the cause of the weak and the lowly will stand firm and secure the enactment of just and righteous laws. The idea of white people's schools is the same as the idea of white men's government, white people's churches, white people's cars. It is all utterly opposed to the spirit of Christianity and to the genius of our Government; and it is high time that it was entirely rooted out of our Republican institutions. The truth is, if the Civil Rights Bill became a law, and colored children go to the public schools, the school will not be broken up. The past proves this. Within a few months, the public schools in some of the cities in central and southern territories, have opened their doors to colored children. There was some opposition at first; but the excitement soon died away, and every thing moved on as before. This would essentially be the result all over the country, if the Civil Rights Bill shall become a law. There would be a good deal of excitement and opposition at first; but the Southern people, as in the past, would acquiesce in the law, and soon matters would become harmonious and peaceful.

Certain members of Congress, who have a great deal to say about what they call, "mixed schools," are very glad to go to a mixed Congress. The fact is, the opposition of many people against sending their children to a school, where there are colored pupils, springs from a foolish whim. So long as negroes are acting in the capacity of servants, they cannot get too near these people of strong prejudices. They like to have them in their parlors, dining rooms and kitchen. They have no objection to sitting on the same seat in the car, or even in church, provided they are servants. A colored boy may stay all day in the school room, and tend the fire, and not a word is said against it. But if the same boy takes his books and goes to school as a scholar, it is a dreadful thing; and wise members of Congress say it would break up our public schools! What will our National Legislature do in this matter? Will they, in order to indulge their foolish, indolent spirit of caste, make provision, in certain cases, to establish separate schools? If people will not send their children to schools where colored children go, then let them keep them at home; or send them to private schools. Surely colored people should not be obliged to keep their children at home, because certain persons have foolish, absurd notions! Our public schools should be public schools in truth and reality. They should be open to all who wish to acquire knowledge. Our law-makers should enact laws for the people and not laws for certain classes. It is surely too late for class legislation.

In Missouri, the school law provides, if there are more than fifteen colored children in a congressional township, that certain school officers shall establish a school for colored children. But if there is not this number of children, no provision is made for a school.

Now, there are hundreds of townships in which there is not the requisite number for a school; and these thousands of colored children are deprived of the means of an education. Thousands of colored men are required to pay taxes to support schools for white children, and yet are not allowed to send their children to school. What an outrage on justice! If the rights of any other class were thus trampled upon, there would be a cry of indignation throughout the entire country. This case alone shows the necessity of the Civil Rights Bill.

Modifying the bill so as to make provision in certain cases for separate schools would be only cutting off some of the branches of their gigantic evil. The root must be removed and destroyed. To do this the bill

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We think the Senator, like many others, has outlived his days of usefulness.

He says "The colored people of Tennessee have now a fine opportunity to show their good sense." Yes, and we propose to avail ourselves of this opportunity by demanding our Representatives in Congress to support and give their votes and influence to every measure of this bill; and if they fail to do this they misrepresent the colored people of this State, and need not hope to be again supported by their suffrages. I know I speak the sentiments of every respectable colored man in this State. We believe that civil rights are needed more in this State than in any other State of the Union. Again, the Senator says "I appeal to the colored people of Tennessee to say if they believe their race can get better educational facilities by attending the same schools with the whites." We say most emphatically, yes. First, because in most districts first-class colored teachers are not paid as good wages as first-class white teachers; secondly, because in most cases when the *pro rata* is insufficient to pay all teachers their full wages, (as it most invariably is,) the colored teachers suffer most; the consequences are that all colored teachers of real worth go to other States to ply their avocation. Thus, you see, that most of our best teachers must go elsewhere to make a living.

The Senator again says, "Let the colored people of Tennessee ask Congress to desist from legislation which enforces mixed schools, and they will have a new claim to respect and confidence." We ask Congress to pass the Civil Rights bill as presented by Hon. Charles Sumner, without a change; and we would say to the Senator from Tennessee, if asserting the rights of freedom will not "establish a new claim to respect and confidence," we ask not their respect—we ask not their confidence.

The best method of eradicating American prejudice is by the co-education of the races; it is by this only that the white race can be taught a practical lesson of the equality of the colored race to the white race. Ask Hon. A. H. Stephens and Robbins what they think of the equality of the races, (assuming them that you will not give publicity to their opinions,) and mark the change which association and debate can make in a few weeks. So much for co-education. We ask for the mixed school cause because we think it advantageous—we demand it because it is right.

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It is learned in that valuable science? Mr. Elliott, there are young ladies here from the East, West, North and South of high moral standing, and before they would dare to do that which is contrary to the laws of propriety, Mr. Elliott, they would rather die—yes, die first.

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NASHVILLE, TENN., Feb. 14, 1874.

To the Editor of the New National Era and Citizen:

While looking over the morning paper I noticed an article under the head of "W. G. Brownlow's views on the Civil Rights bill," in which he most decidedly misrepresents the colored portion of his constituency. He was elected to the position which he now holds by a radical legislature, upon the broad and Heaven-approved principle of equal rights to all mankind. We concede to the Senator many acts of justice and right to the colored people of the State while governor, but since his election to the United States Senate he has never lifted his voice in defense of the equal rights of the colored man; so you see that all his loyal acts as governor have been comprehended by the more than meridian darkness of this I guess his last act, viz, opposing the mixed school feature in the Civil Rights bill.

We think the Senator, like many others, has outlived his days of usefulness.

He says "The colored people of Tennessee have now a fine opportunity to show their good sense." Yes, and we propose to avail ourselves of this opportunity by demanding our Representatives in Congress to support and give their votes and influence to every measure of this bill; and if they fail to do this they misrepresent the colored people of this State, and need not hope to be again supported by their suffrages